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Message Text

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21
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01

CIEP-03 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-03 INR-11 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06

SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

DOTE-00 DRC-01 /176 W
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R 280848Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0825
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, ELTN, PL
SUBJECT: POLISH TRANSPORT SYSTEM FALTERS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE

1. SUMMARY: POLAND'S TRANSPORT PROBLEMS, LONG A TARGET OF PRIVATE AND OFFICIAL CRITICISM, ARE BEING AIRED IN UNACCUSTOMED DETAIL BY THE NATION'S PRESS THESE DAYS, AS TRANSPORT SERVICES STRUGGLE TO KEEP PACE WITH PEAK DEMAND. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES APPEARING UNDER THE BANNER: "GREEN LIGHT ON THE RAILS," "TRYBUNA LUDU" IS PROVIDING A DAILY SUMMARY OF TRANSPORT ACTIVITY, INCLUDEING REPORTS OF SIGNIFICANT DELAYS, SOMETIMES ACCOMPANIED BY INTER-VIEWS WITH THE UNLUCKY OFFENDERS. ACCORDING TO THESE AND OTHER PRESS ACCOUNTS, POLISH STATE RAILWAYS DID NOT MEET 1974 PLAN GOALS IN JULY, FELL 400 THOUSAND TONS (SIC) BEHIND IN THE FIRST 10 DAYS OF AUGUST, AND WERE 881 THOUSAND TONS BELOW PLAN BY THE 18TH. THE MOST COMMONLY CITED CAUSES OF THIS SHORTFALL ARE DELAYS
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BY INDUSTRIAL USERS IN LOADING AND UNLOADING RAIL SHIP-

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MENTS AND FAILURE OF SHIPPERS TO MAKE FULL USE OF AVAIL-
ABLE TRANSPORT ON WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS. ALTHOUGH IN
ABSOLUTE TERMS THE "CAR-HOURS" OF DELAY TIME HAVE
DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN 1974 (446 THOUSAND "CAR-
HOURS" TO JULY 18 THIS YEAR VERSUS 844 THOUSAND AT THE
SAME TIME LAST YAR), THE DELAYS ARE PREVENTING FUL-
FILLMENT OF THIS YEAR'S PLAN FOR TRANSPORT SECTOR,
WHICH CALLS FOR AN INCREASE OF 27 MILLION TONS OVER
SHIPMENTS CARRIED IN 1973.

3. ROLLING STOCK PRODUCTION IS REPORTEDLY EXCEEDING
1974 PLAN LEVELS (6.7 THOUSAND UNITS COMPLETED AS OF
AUGUST 1, VERSUS 5.5 THOUSAND PLANNED), BUT THE RETIRE-
MENT OF USED STOCK (6.5 THOUSAND) DURING THE SAME
PERIOD LEFT LITTLE NET GAIN IN CARRYING CAPACITY.

4. ROAD TRANSPORT IS APPARENTLY NOT RELIEVING MUCH OF
THE PRESSURE ON THE RAIL SYSTEM. A RECENT "ZYCIE
WARSZAWY" ARTILCE OBSERVED THAT MOTOR TRANSPORT IS
CHARACTERIZED BY "ENORMOUS WASTE." IT NOTED THAT ABOUT
ONE-THIRD OF ALL TRANSPORT VEHICLES ARE AWAITING REPAIRS,
AND THAT POLICE CHECKS ARE UNCOVERING EVIDENCE OF POOR
ORGANIZATION (TOO MANY EMPTY HAULS) AND CHEATING
(ILLEGAL TRANSPORT OF PRIVATE CARGO).

5. COMMENT: A NUMBER OF FACTORS HAVE COMBINED TO PLACE
UNPRECEDENTED BURDENS ON POLISH TRANSPORT THIS YEAR.
STRIVING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIGH PRICES THE POLES
HAVE INCREASED COAL EXPORTS BY 17.5 PERCENT IN THE FIRST
SIX MONTHS OF 1974. ALL OF THIS COAL IS CARRIED BY RAIL
FROM THE PITHEAD. UNFAVORABLE SUMMER WEATHER HAS
DELAYED THE HARVEST FROM TWO TO FOUR WEEKS, COMPRESSING
THE HEAVY TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS OF THE HARVEST AND THE
FALL SOWING SEASON INTO TOO BRIEF A TIME SPAN. TO THESE
EXTRAORDINARY DEMANDS MUST BE ADDED THE NORMAL OBLIGA-
TIONS OF DISTRIBUTING FUEL SUPPLIES (COAL) FOR THE WINTER,
AND MEETING THE EXPANDING TRANSPORT NEEDS OF THE
GROWING POLISH ECONOMY.

6. PUBLICITY ALONE WILL CERTAINLY NOT SUFFICE TO
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UNRAVEL POLAND'S TANGLE OF TRANSPORT PROBLEMS. THE
IMPACT OF CHRONICALLY INADEQUATE INVESTMENT AND POOR
ORGANIZATION WILL NOT BE EASILY OVERCOME, AND EVEN IF
THE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES EARN TRANSPORT A MORE
IMPORTANT PLACE IN THE 1976-81 FIVE-YEAR PLAN, IT WILL
LIKELY BE SOME YEARS BEFORE REAL IMPROVEMENT TAKES
PLACE. END COMMENT.
DAVIS

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